Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 03188 231902Z

43
ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3188

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF MARCELINO OREJA

1. I HAD MARCELINO OREJA, AREILZA'S SUBSECRETARY, TO LUNCH WITH BRIAN ATWOOD. THE LUNCH PROVIDED A USEFUL PERSPECTIVE ON THE CURRENT VIEWS OF OREJA AND LIKEMINDED POLITICOS (E.G. TACITO AND MODERATE CD'S) ON THE REFORM PROCESS. OREJA MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

2. THE KING MUST TAKE A LEAD TO GOVERN, AS IT WERE, FOR TWO MONTHS IN ORDER TO REIGN FOR 30 YEARS, THIS DIDN'T MEAN THE KING SHOULD TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT HE MUST GET ARIAS TO PUSH THE REFORM PROCESS AND MAKE THE PROPER SPPEECH ON APRIL 29, OR ELSE REPLACE HIM.

-- HE HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE KING'S INTENTION TO BRING SPAIN TO A DEMOCRATIC MONARCHY AND THOUGHT THE KING WOULD CARRY IT OFF SOMEHOW. ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA HAD RETURNED OPTIMISTIC FROM AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING YESTERDAY. BUT THE KING WAS FACED WITH CONFLICTING ADVICE AND HAD TO BE CAREFUL ON THE TACTICS.

--THE NEWSWEEK STORY PROBABLY WOULD BLOW OVER, SINCE IT HAD BEEN DENIED. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT DID
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 03188 231902Z

NOT SEEM THAT ARIAS WAS GOING TO MAKE MUCH OF IT.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

3. NONETHELESS, ARIAS WAS THE PROBLEM. AS A LONGTIME ADMINISTRATOR AND PRODUCT OF THE FRANCO ERA WHEN THERE WAS ONLY ONE LEADER, HIS NATURE RAN AGAINST TAKING A POLITICAL LEAD, THOUGH THE KING MIGHT PREVAIL TO GET ARIAS TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

-- IF FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER ARIAS WOULD NOT MAKE THE RIGHT SPEECH, THEN HE MUST BE REPLACED. THE KING HAD THE CLOUT, THOUGH THE KING MIGHT NOT FEEL SURE OF THIS, TO FORCE THROUGH THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM THE PROPER THREE-SOME OF NAMES FROM WHICH HE COULD CHOOSE. IN RETROSPECT, HE THOUGHT NOT REPLACING ARIAS AT THE OUTSET WAS THE KING'S BIGGEST ERROR. HE COULD HAVE DONE SO, ALTHOUGH OREJA RECOGNIZED IT MIGHT HAVE PROVOKED A CRISIS AFTER THE NAMING OF FERNANDEZ MIRANDA TO THE CORTES.

--THE MILITARY WILL OBEY THE KING. THEY ARE USED TO OBEDIENCE AND EVEN IF THERE ARE POLITICAL AND GENERATIONAL DIVISIONS AMONG THEM, THEY ARE NOT YET CRITICAL.

4. ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA AND SOME OF THE TACITO PEOPLE HAD DRAWN UP A RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION PROPOSAL ON THE REFERENDUM. THE REFERENDUM'S CONTENT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE LEFT OPPOSITION, SO THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD NOT ATTEMPT AN ABSTENTIONIST CAMPAIGN. THE PROBLEM OF DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ONES, SO LONG AS ARIAS REMAINED IN OFFICE FOR HE SIMPLY WOULD NOT MEET WITH THEM.

-- A SINGLE PROPOSITION ON THE MONARCHY, AS ADVOCATED BY SOME OF THE BUNKER, WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE INSTITUTION. EVEN A TWO PROPOSITION REFERENDUM ON THE LAW OF SUCCESSION AND THE SHAPE OF A NEW PARLIAMENT HAD ITS DRAWBACKS, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE OLD REGIME STALWARTS IN THE CORTES WOULD ATTEMPT TO EMASCULATE THE PARLIAMENT. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE INDICATED THAT THE DRAFT RULES FOR EXPEDITED CORTES CONSIDERATION
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(SEPTEL) COULD BE A HELP IN HANDLING THE CORTES PROBLEM.

--THE BEST APPROACH WOULD BE A SINGLE QUESTION IN FOUR OR FIVE PARTS DEALING WITH THE MONARCHY (IN SOME INDIRECT FASHION), THE PROPOSITION OF A UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE BASED PARTLIAMENT, AND OTHER CENTRAL ISSUES (PRESUMABLY INCLUDING LABOR). ARMED WITH A BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, THE GOVERNMENT

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

COULD DECREE IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION.
SUCH A REFERENDUM REQUIRES AN "ACUERDO" OF THE
CORTES, WHICH DOES NOT MEAN APPROVAL BUT SIMPLY
A PRONOUNCEMENT OF CORTES VIEWS, THOUGH THE BUNKER
MIGHT ARGUE AGAINST THAT INTERPRETATION. IF THE
GOVERNMENT AND KING WERE UNITED, THEIR POLITICAL WILL
WOULD PREVAIL IN AN ARGUMENT OVER INTERPRETATION.
(ALL THIS SHOWS HOW COMPLEX IS THE ARGUMENT OVER HOW TO
HANDLE THE REFERENDUM).

5. THE LEFT, INCLUDING RUIZ GIMENEZ AND THE PSOE OF
FELIPE GONZALEZ, HAVE PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF THE
RIGHT. FORTUNATELY, THE PLATA-JUNTA IS GOING NOWHERE
IN AN OPERATIONAL SENSE AND PRESUMABLY GIL ROBLES
WILL NOT REALLY JOIN. (ONE OF RUIZ GIMENEZ' LIEUTENANTS
DID TELL ATWOOD AND AN EMBOFF THAT THE PCE HAD ACCEPTED
HIS CONDITIONS, WHICH IS NO SURPRISE, ALBEIT WITH QUAL-
IFICATIONS.)

-- OREJA SAID THE UGT CONVENTION, THOUGH IT WAS A
GOOD THING IN SOME RESPECTS, HAD A BAD SIDE, THE
SIGHT OF SOCIALIST WORKERS CLENCHING THEIR FISTS AND
SINGING THE INTERNATIONALE, WHICH WAVED A RED FLAG
AT NOT ONLY THE BUNKER, BUT AT MANY PEOPLE.
THE OPPOSITION NEEDED TO AVOID THE TACTICAL
ERROR OF STRENGTHENING THE HAND OF THE RIGHT, PARTICULARLY
IN THE ADVENT OF ARIAS' SPEECH.

6. ATWOOD EXPLAINED TO OREJA THAT AT THE MOMENT THE
OUTLOOK FOR SENATE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE TREATY
OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION PRIOR TO THE KING'S
VISIT WAS GOOD. IF ARIAS SHOULD MAKE A BAD SPEECH,
THE REACTION WOULD BE BAD AND THE SENATE MIGHT EASILY
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DECIDE TO DELAY UNTIL THINGS BECAME CLEARER HERE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, A GOOD SPEECH BY ARIAS WOULD
CLEARLY HELP THE RATIFICATION PROCESS. I EMPHASIZED,
AS I HAVE ON RECENT OCCASIONS, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S REGAINING THE INITIATIVE
BY TAKING A CLEAR LEAD.
 STABLER

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